(a) whether the catering department of Railways is running in losses despite the continuous increase in the sale;

(b) the details of the profit earned/loss incurred by the department during last three years;

(c) whether the catering unit at Varanasi station is running in losses continuously from 1984 to 1990;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the action taken against the persons found responsible for it and the steps taken to streamline the system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) The sales turnover and profit/loss of Departmental Catering on Indian Railways for last three years are as under:

Year	*Sales Turnover (Rupees in crores)*	*Profit/Loss (Rupees in crores)*
1987-88	56.33	(-) 0.30
1988-89	65.71	(-) 0.71
1989-90	72.18	(-) 0.23

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The losses are mainly due to increase in input costs as well as staff costs. The staff costs have gone up because Commission Vendors are being paid the same salary as regular employee under Court orders.

(e) Question of fixation of responsibility does not arise in view of above. Steps taken/ proposed to be taken to reduce/eliminate losses include strict monitoring of expenditure, sales promotion, intensive inspections and de-departmentalisation.

Contract Labour System in Railways

6412. SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether contract labour system is still going on in the Railways;

(b) whether the contract labourers are being exploited; and

(c) whether the Government have taken a decision to do away with this system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir. In certain establishments/operations.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

[*English*]

Transfer of Pune-Miraj Section

6413. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from various public

representative from South Western Maharashtra regarding transfer of Pune-Miraj Kolhapur broadgauge section from the South-Central zone to Central Railway; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal has been examined in the light of operational and administrative requirements and not found to be feasible.

[*Translation*]

Ban on Supplying Diesel in Drums and Canes

6414. SHRI HARPAL PANWAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ban imposed by the Government on supplying diesel in drums and canes is still in force and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether farmers are facing great difficulties as a result thereof; and

(c) if so, the action being taken by the Government for lifting this ban?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Halt of Puri and Nilachal Express at Tundla Station

6415. SHRI SURESHANAND SWAMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether halt of Puri and Nilachal Express at Tundla Junction has been cancelled;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to restore halt of these two trains there; and

(d) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Operational exigencies.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) In order to avoid increasing the total running time of the train.

[*English*]

Magneto-Hydro-Dynamic Project

6416. SHRI RADHIKA RANJAN PRAMANIK: Will the MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the coal based MHD Pilot Power Project has achieved its objective;

(b) if so, the manner in which this technology is utilised in the conventional Thermal Power Plants; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) The coal based MHD Pilot power plant has successfully demonstrated, at the experimental level, the technical feasibility of generating electricity using MHD technology.